

INITIAL DRAFT-WIA FY 2010 BOSTON ANNUAL PLAN

ANSWERS TO NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

Adult, Dislocated Worker, Wagner-Peyser

- 1. Describe how your area's FY 2010 service plan aligns with the Governor's vision for a continuum of education and training opportunities that support a skilled workforce. What local priorities for FY2010 specifically align with the Governor's vision?***

As described in the existing Commonwealth of Massachusetts state-wide plan, as modified on June 30, 2009, the Governor's vision for the workforce development system includes a statement that *all Massachusetts residents will have the competencies, employment skills, and education to support themselves and their families and to live a quality life.* This is a very ambitious goal under the best of economic conditions and circumstances. But regardless of the current recession and its impact on the local economy, the Boston FY 2010 service plan recognizes that businesses still need skilled workers with the competencies, employment skills and education to meet their workforce requirements. In order to meet the needs of these businesses now and in the future as the economy recovers and grows, and to meet the needs of the existing workforce, it is even more important that the unemployed, new jobseekers and current workers can access a life-long continuum of education and training.

In supporting the Commonwealth's vision of a continuum of education and training opportunities in the state, the Boston FY 2010 service plan will continue to target those most in need of assistance in order to become economically self-sufficient. Since the inception of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), the Boston Workforce Investment Board has consistently voted that funds are limited and priorities are for low income customers, including those who are working poor. Among other indicators of priority status approved by the Boston Workforce Investment Board are: an English reading and computing achievement at less than a 9th grade level; employed, but earning less than 175% of the Lower Living Standard Income Level; lack of a good work history, with extensive periods of unemployment or underemployment, or of non-participation in the labor market; a history of involvement with the courts that affects employability; and other identifiable barriers to employment including a disability. Additional priorities specifically relating to dislocated workers that the Board set were for those for whom educational achievement or English language ability may affect re-employment. Career centers already use work history data as provided on membership forms and through other sources (customer interviews) to analyze trends. These data, combined with labor market information gathered from federal, state and local data banks along with direct contact with local businesses contribute to the identification of transferable skills and facilitate business recruitment strategies designed to align the needs and requirements of business customers with the skills, experience and abilities of the career centers' job seeker customers. Boston will also continue to make a priority of building the links between adult education and job skills training programs, the development of programs that combine basic adult education and skills training into one class; and the links between adult education and higher education. These links advance continuity in education and training by strengthening the pipeline that ensures that students can move from ESOL or GED classes into training for skilled positions and then subsequently into community college and eventually four year college, or anywhere along that continuum that fits their goals and abilities.

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While the Boston FY 2010 service plan priority populations is consistent with the WIA statute, the limited availability of funds, in the context of the severity of the recession and its impact on the economy, will make it very difficult to achieve performance goals, despite the welcome influx of dollars under the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA), which are being used to supplement WIA dollars. As detailed in Boston's ARRA plan, and supported by the Commonwealth's own plan, there have been dramatic changes since March of 2008. Overall, an analysis of these changes show that higher numbers and percentages of more educated, and higher level, more highly paid jobholders in Boston have been affected by job loss during this recession. These data and other demographic factors point to a highly competitive situation with fewer jobs available for more job seekers, many with more competencies, more employment skills and higher education levels than the traditional WIA priority populations.

2. *As ARRA guidance strongly encourages local areas to expend most of their allocated ARRA funds quickly, and given the reduction in the FY 2010 regular local allocation amounts, how will the WIB plan to monitor and adjust its service activities in a manner so as to assure continuity of delivery and avoid any service disruptions?*

Since January of this year, the demand for ITA training dollars has increased dramatically. All FY 2009 WIA 1A and 1D training funds were fully obligated by March. As of the date of the submission of this plan, all 1A and 1D ARRA ITA training funds have been fully obligated, as have at least one third of the FY 2010 WIA 1A and 1D funds. In addition, Boston set aside \$500,000 for group training for various special populations and will be obligating those funds by the end of September 2009. The Boston WIB will continue to monitor the situation closely, and plans to follow a defined schedule that releases ITA funds to the career centers incrementally (50% July; 40% November; and 10% February). It is clear, however, that the demand for training services is likely to exceed available resources for the foreseeable future. Boston has moved quickly to obligate and spend its ARRA funding, not only to meet the current need, but also in the hope that additional funding will follow. We have brought to the attention of the Commonwealth the fact that Massachusetts receives less than it might in federal formula funds, and that Boston and other areas within Massachusetts are in turn penalized by some of the formula elements. We trust that under WIA reauthorization, a more rational method of funding distribution, based on the actual numbers of eligible individuals in a community, will prevail.

Structurally, Boston is planning and delivering WIA services in a manner that supports integration of and continuity with ARRA funding. The development of ARRA planning and the implementation of plans are made by the same WIB committees and the implementation is carried through by the same staffs who manage general WIA implementation. In this way, there are none of the coordination issues that might occur if we had set up organizational structure solely around disbursement of ARRA funds.

Boston can assure the continuity of intensive services for job seekers but since the bulk of Boston's WIA funds support job training through ITAs, the limited availability of funds will affect continuity. Group training contracts with ARRA funds will help some with continuity of training services and the service disruption issue for special populations because many of the recommended providers have offered multiple cycles, thereby spreading out this one-time training opportunity. Boston is also fortunate in having a linkage program which requires developers to pay into a trust fund for job training. This has allowed the City to supplement its

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WIA funds, and weather temporary funding reductions over the years. However, with the onset of the recession, development has slowed in the city, leading to a significant drop-off in linkage payments.

3. *What strategies have been either implemented or are under consideration for FY2010 that are intended to move the local workforce development system to addressing training needs and job development initiatives specific to green industries and occupations?*

The overall strategy of the WIB in regards to green job training is to maximize the amount of funding coming to the City of Boston from State, Federal and private sources, to imbed green job training within the existing workforce system, and to coordinate green job training efforts with green job creation policies so as to maximize employment outcomes.

Several months ago, using linkage funds, Boston funded its first green jobs skills training program to prepare building maintenance workers to meet the energy efficiency requirements of today's buildings and systems. The success of that program has led to its expansion, and the agency which operates it, the Asian American Civic Association, is now building upon it to develop a registered apprenticeship program in energy efficiency.

Several other organizations have green jobs programs in the planning or development stage. The City of Boston and the Workforce Investment Board have been active in an effort coordinated by the SkillWorks initiative to provide a number of those organizations with small planning grants and technical assistance to prepare the Boston training community to compete for state and national grant competitions. Several Boston organizations have received funding from the State's Clean Energy Center, and several will be part of a federal Pathways Out of Poverty proposal currently being developed by the WIB.

In order to coordinate green job training with green job creation the WIB is working closely with City initiatives that will create green jobs, including: Renew Boston, Solar Boston and other programs funded by the City's Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block grant; the weatherization programs administered by Boston's community action and public housing agencies; Boston's Green Affordable Housing program; and the City's green transportation initiatives.

In addition, Boston and the WIB have developed a number of youth programs with a green jobs focus. Our 2009 summer jobs campaign includes roughly 200 (all funding sources; approximately 65 are ARRA-funded) jobs with an environmental or "green" focus. Also, at least one of the ARRA-funded group training programs will be for a green jobs/weatherization initiative.

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Youth

4. *Please describe the region's overarching initiatives/priorities for providing services to youth for FY 2010. Include in the response the type and availability of youth activities (WIA and non-WIA) in the local area.*

The mission of Boston's Workforce Investment Act (WIA) youth system is ensure that hard-to-serve, low-income youth who are not being effectively served in mainstream education and youth development systems have the skills and credentials necessary to access career-oriented employment.

Boston has a strong youth development system for young people who meet a certain threshold of readiness to participate in it. The WIA system's primary goal in satisfying its mission is to ensure that there is a safety net for those young people who have difficulty accessing or being successful in this mainstream system. A secondary goal will be to impact the infrastructure of mainstream systems so that they work for all young people.

The key to success in Boston's WIA youth system is its ability to transition youth into and out of the range of opportunities and services necessary for their successful development as responsible workers and citizens. Working through both WIA-funded youth service providers and a range of non-WIA funded youth service providers, this system will ensure that the most disadvantaged and at-risk young people have access to proven alternative modes of youth service delivery as well as access to the mainstream youth and workforce development systems.

Priority Populations

- High school dropouts or those likely to drop out;
- Court-involved youth and other law enforcement referrals;
- Young Boston Housing Authority (BHA) residents;
- Young people in Department of Social Services (DSS) custody;
- Out-of-school youth.

Service Priorities

- Tracking and referral services for every WIA participant.
- Alternative education that offers basic skill remediation, GED preparation and high school diploma options.
- Career exploration and employment programming geared toward providing an understanding of career options within a given industry, developing industry-relevant work-based readiness skills and employment competencies, and working to connect youth with next steps resulting in education, training, and employment outcomes.
- Follow-up services to ensure that former participants are employed, in post-secondary education or training, or in an appropriate social support service leading to employment or post-secondary education or training.

Boston has alternative education, career exploration, and summer jobs as its main program focal points. This gives a balance of emphasis between education and jobs. In trying to make services available to all students, two years ago we began funding Bay Cove Human Services

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which works with youth with special needs for career programming. This year we are negotiating with, and anticipate funding, DEAF, Inc. which works with the deaf and hard of hearing population for education. We continue to attempt to include as many youth populations as possible. This is also in line with the theme of our Youth Transitions Task Force which has been meeting for several years now with the purpose of reaching all students with the services they need.

In addition to WIA and the ARRA for a variety of program models, Boston funds alternative education programming with city of Boston funds through its Alternative Education Initiative. Additional summer jobs finding comes from the city funding, private sector, and state funding.

5. *Workforce investment areas failing one of more youth performance measures as of the 3rd quarter of FY 2009 must describe in detail, the specific action steps that will be taken to ensure performance improvement for each measure in FY 2010. Please include a timeline for major activity (local area may include all relevant action steps taken in FY 2009 to address the performance, including sub-recipient corrective action).*

As of the quarter ending March 31, 2009, Boston was below 80% of only one goal, that of Older Youth Employment Retention. We were at 78% of our goal, very close to the threshold of 80%. Typically we are low on our performance at the end of the third quarter and improve when programming ends at the end of the fiscal/school year. We will follow up on our students to make sure all of their successes are shown in MOSES and we will continue help any additional students who need assistance.

The increases in the goals from FY 08 have made reaching our goals more challenging, especially with the economic downturn.

6. *Indicate the workforce investment board approved additional eligibility barriers for youth "who require additional assistance to complete an education program or to secure and hold employment" (WIA 101(13)). Please indicate the documentation requirements for this barrier.*

The following are Boston's workforce investment board approved eligibility barriers for youth "who require additional assistance to complete an education program or to secure and hold employment" with the documents to be used to prove eligibility. "09-20" refers to the Commonwealth's MassWorkforce Policy Issuance 09-20, dated 04/08/2009, which addresses Title 1 Eligibility Requirements.

- 1) Youth who failed the MCAS in the last round,
 - A) School Department report card or other document
- 2) Youth who is one or more grade levels below appropriate grade level,
 - A) School Department records with age documents (see 09-20)
- 3) Youth who has been identified as having a disability, including a learning disability,
 - A) See Disability documentation from 09-20

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- 4) Youth who has been identified as truant or as having a significant school attendance problem based on BPS standard or law enforcement referral,
 - A) School Department or educational or career program records
 - B) Law enforcement or court records
- 5) Youth who requires English as a Second Language instruction,
 - A) School Department records
 - B) Educational or career program assessment
- 6) Youth who resides in a single parent household,
 - A) See Family Size documentation from 09-20
- 7) Youth whose parents were employed for less than 6 months total in the last year,
 - A) See Income documentation from 09-20
 - B) Career Center records
 - C) Job placement program records
- 8) Older youth with a secondary credential who has been actively seeking employment unsuccessfully for at least 15 weeks in the past year, or
 - A) Career Center documentation
 - B) Job placement program records
 - C) Unemployment records
 - D) Applicant statement
- 9) Youth who lives in a public housing development.
 - A) Computer Printout from other Government Agency
 - B) Driver's License
 - C) Food Stamp Award Letter
 - D) Homelessness Documentation
 - E) Boston Housing Authority Verification
 - F) Insurance Policy (Residence/Auto)
 - G) Landlord Statement
 - H) Lease
 - I) Letter from Social Security Administration or School
 - J) Library Card
 - K) Medicaid/Medicare Card
 - L) Phone Directory
 - M) Postmarked Mail Addressed to Applicant
 - N) Property Tax Records
 - O) Rent Receipt
 - P) Selective Service Registration Card
 - Q) Utility Bill
 - R) Voter Identification Card
 - S) Applicant/Parent Statement
 - T) Public Housing document

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The first eight of the above have been in place since WIA's inception in Boston. The ninth was approved in 2009.

7. ***Local areas must indicate all successful providers of youth services as part of the Annual Plan. Please update the Youth Provider Survey to reflect providers that may not have been listed at the time of the ARRA business plan submission (661.350 (7)). If all successful providers were included in the ARRA submission, please indicate such as your response.***

All of the WIA Youth contractors were included on the Youth Provider survey will remain for FY 10. In addition to them we are currently negotiating with DEAF, Inc. for a WIA Youth contract to provide educational services to the deaf and hard of hearing youth. More information will follow when an agreement is reached.

8. ***Please describe the local area's support service and needs related payment policies and procedure for youth program participants. The response should indicate who is responsible for making decisions about supportive service, what type of activities are provided, how are individual needs determined and cost parameters for support services and needs related payments. Attach the support services needs related payment policy.***

Boston's WIA Youth system does not directly administer support services or needs based payments for youth participants. Our WIA Youth contractors make decisions for the individual's needs and provide those services through in-house resources or through partnerships and referrals.

9. ***Please describe how the local workforce investment board satisfies the requirement for competitive procurement in WIA section 123. The response should outline the process used to award grants and contracts for youth activities (661.350 (10)). The response should also indicate how the local workforce investment board ensures the youth procurement adherence to MassWorkforce Policy 01-52. A copy of the local procurement procedure may be attached to satisfy this portion of the response. In addition, please indicate if the area will utilize youth ITAs and the follow-up waiver.***

Monies are awarded for WIA-funded youth program activities through a competitive, publicly advertised Request for Proposal (RFP) process, consistent with the guidelines established in MassWorkforce Policy Issuance 01-52. The process is extremely well-documented, and the entire process and file documentation is reviewed regularly by both DCS staff and outside auditors performing the annual Single Audit of the Economic Development & Industrial Corporation of Boston (EDIC). The Boston WIB, together with EDIC's Office of Jobs & Community Services (JCS), develop funding recommendations which are presented to the Youth Council for review and approval. The Boston Area does not plan to utilize youth ITAs or the follow-up waiver.